

you were to turn to the speaker, and say, Now what *is* that idea? What do you plainly mean by that expression? — you would often find with how indistinct a conception, with how little attention to the very idea itself, the mind had been contented. And this contentment you would often observe to be, not a humble acquiescence in a consciously defective apprehension of some principle, of which a man feels and confesses the difficulty of attaining more than a partial conception, but the satisfied assurance that he fully understands what he is expressing. On another subject, where there were no settled forms of words to beguile him into the feeling as if he thought and understood, when in fact he did not, and where words must have been selected to define his own formation of the thought, his embarrassment how to express himself would have made him aware that his notion had no shape, and have compelled an intellectual effort to give it one. But it is against all reason that Christian truth should be believed and professed with a less concern for precision, and at the expense of less mental exercise, than any other subject would require. And of how little consequence it would seem to be, in *this* mode of believing, whether a man entertains one system of principles or the opposite.

But if such arguments could not be alleged, it would still seem far from desirable, without evident necessity, to clothe evangelical sentiment in a diction varying in more than a few indispensable terms from the general standard, for the simple reason, that it must be barbarous; unless, as I have observed, it be raised quite above the authority of this standard, and of the criticism and the taste which appeal to it, by the venerable dignity of inspiration, which we have no more to expect, or by the intellectual power of a genius almost surpassing human nature. I do not know whether it be absolutely impossible that there should arise a man whose manner of thinking shall be so transcendent in originality and demonstrative vigour, as to authorize him to throw the language into a new order, all his own: but it is questionable whether there ever appeared such a writer, in any language which had been cultivated to its maturity. Even Milton, who might, if ever mortal might, be warranted to sport with all established authority and usage, and to run the language into whatever unsanctioned forms woulr*